undertaken for the modernisation and expansion of these stations?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI C.K. JAFFER SHARIEF): (a) Rs. 14.50 crores.

(b) The proposed allocations will be as per the over-all availability of funds during the Eighth Plan. However, for 1992-93, the allocation is Rs. 5.67 crores.

(c) Works like raising of platform level, provision of platform sheds, benches, urinals, foot over bridges, waiting rooms/halls, booking offices, public address system, train indication board, computerisation of reservation etc. will be undertaken subject to a work being justified as per prescribed norms and availability of funds.

[*English*]

Preservation of Eco-Systems

*376. SHRI S. B. SIDNAL: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether attention of the Government has been drawn to the news-item captioned "Mining threatens sanctuary in Orissa" appearing in the Economic Times dated December 23, 1991;

(b) if so, the facts thereof;

(c) the steps taken by the Government for the preservation of wildlife and maintenance of ecological balance in the sanctuaries;

(d) whether mining activities inside sanctuaries and National Parks are permissible under the Forest Conservation & Wildlife Protection Acts;

(e) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(f) the precautions proposed to be taken to preserve eco-systems?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI RANGARAJAN KUMARAMANGALAM): (a) Yes. Sir.

(b) As the sanctuaries are under the administrative control of the state Governments, the information is being collected from the Government of Orissa and will be laid on the Table of the House.

(c) and (f). A statement is given below.

(d) and (e). Mining activities inside sanctuaries and national parks cannot by their very nature be permitted under the provisions of Wild Life Protection Act as ammended. This would also be a diversion of forest land attracting the provisions of Forest Conservation Act.

STATEMENT

The steps taken by the Government for preservation of Widlife, maintaining ecological balance and preserving eco-systems are as follows:

(i) The Wildlife Institute of India has prepared a report "Planning a protected Area Network in India" containing detailed recommendations for expanding the network of National Parks and Wildlife Sanctuaries in the country to adequately protect and conserve Wildlife and the eco-systems of which they are a part.

(ii) Endangered and rare species of Wildlife have been included in

Scheduled I and II (Part II) of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, thus giving them maximum possible protection under law. There is also a complete ban on hunting of wildlife under this Act.

(iii) The Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 also provides for stringent and deterrent punishment for causing any damage or disturbance to a Wildlife Sanctuary. The boundaries of a Sanctuary cannot also be altered without approval of the concerned State Legislature.

(iv) Under the Centrally Sponsored Schemes, assistance for the development of Sanctuaries and National Parks, Project Tiger and Eco-development around National Parks and Sanctuaries, including Tiger Reserves, Central assistance is provided to various Sanctuaries and National Parks for their development and Scientific management, including development of their buffer zones.

(v) A number of zoos in India have been successfully breeding endangered species of wildlife, thus helping in ex-situ conservation of these valuable genepools.

(vi) Central assistance under the Schemes "Conservation of Rhinos in Assam" is provided to the Government of Assam for intensive protection and conservation of rhinos in all their natural habitats in Assam.

(vii) A new Centrally Sponsored Scheme "Project Elephant" has been launched in the current financial year to protect and conserve all elephant population in the country through concerted measures to protect their habitats, restoration of migratory corridors and mitigating manelephant conflights.

Women's Education

*377. DR. R. SRIDHARAN: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the University Grants Commission propose to fund the various academics and infrastructures for the development of women's education in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) The criteria fixed for providing funds therefor?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI ARJUN SINGH): (a) to (c). University Grants Commission provides financial assistance to all eligible Universities and Colleges for purchase of books, journals and equipment, appointment of teachers, construction of academic and hostel buildings, and for special programmes for promotion of research. According to the information furnished by UGC, the Commission has relaxed norms for financial assitance for women's institutions as follows:

— The minimum students enrolment had been relaxed to 150 for women's colleges as against 250 for other colleges.

— The minimum number of teachers need be only 5 for women's colleges as against 10 for other colleges.